THE PAINTER MILLET

LIFE OF THE ARTIST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORK AFIELD.

The Way the "Cry of the Soil" Used to Ring In His Ears—Times When He and His Wife Felt the Pangs of Hunger—When Success Came.

Millet's early life was very close to nature. His father's farm was at Gruchy, in the hilly department of Manche, which juts out like a promontory into the English channel. In that narrow strip the sea is nowhere far off. He grew up in the air of the hills and of the sea, surroundings bringing sturdiness of character and development of imagination, if a boy chance to have either of these, and the young Millet had. He knew nothing of art or artists, but he had the desire to represent what he saw, and in the interims of work upon the farm he would copy the engravings in the family Bible or take a piece of charcoal and draw upon a white wall. By the time he was eighteen a family council was held and it was decided that the father should take him to Cherbourg and consult a local painter as to a career's prospects. The painter advised in studying art, and undertook to teach him. However, he worked in Cherbourg only two months, for then his father died and he had to return home to resume his work as a farm laborer. Three more years he labored until the municipality of Cherbourg provided a sum of money to enable him to go to Paris to study.

He was now twenty-three, a broad chested Hercules, awkward and shy, his big head covered with long fair hair, with nothing to denote intellectual force except a pair of piercing dark blue eyes. Delaroche, to whose studio he attached himself, was kind to him, but Millet could not understand the large classical pictures that the master painted. To him they seemed artificial, with no real sentiment. Ringing in his ears even then, as he used to say in later life, was the "cry of the soil"—memories of his home life, that in some way he wanted to learn to paint. Delaroche's studio was no place for him, and after a little while he left it.

Then followed eight years of beating the air. He married and had to bestir himself for a living. He tried to paint what the people seemed to like—pretty little figure subjects—but prettiness was not in his line, and the attempt to seek it disgusted him. Suddenly he made the great resolve to paint what he wished to and could paint, and in 1848 produced "The Winnower." It represented a clumsy peasant, in uncouth working clothes, stooping over a sieve as he shakes it to and fro. From the point of view of the academies a shockingly vulgar picture! Yet it sold for 500 francs ($100). Millet now had the courage of his convictions.

His friend Jacque, afterward the celebrated painter and etcher of sheep and poultry, told him of a little place with a name ending in "zon," near the forest of Fontainebleau, where they could live cheaply and study from nature. The two painters, with their wives and children, rumbled out of Paris in a cart which took them to the town of Fontainebleau. Thence they proceeded on foot through the forest. It was very wild in those days. "How beautiful!" was Millet's constant exclamation. Arrived at Barbizon, they were welcomed at Ganne's inn by Rousseau, Diaz and the other artists who lived in the village.

When a fresh painter came into the colony it was the custom to take down from the wall a certain big pipe, that, as the newcomer puffed at it, the company might judge from the rings of smoke whether he was to be reckoned among the "academics" or the "colorists." Jacque was proclaimed a colorist; but, some uncertainty being expressed concerning Millet, the latter exclaimed, "Ah, well, if you are embarrassed, put me in a class of my own." "A good answer," cried Diaz, "and he looks strong and big enough to hold his own in it." The little pleasantry was prophetic.

But its fulfillment was deferred for many years, during which Millet worked on in poverty, pictures that now would bring large sums of money being refused at the exhibitions of the salon and finding no purchasers. A hint of his condition is contained in a letter to his friend Sensier, acknowledging the receipt of $20: "I have received the hundred francs. They came just at the right time. Neither my wife nor I had tasted food for twenty-four hours. It's a blessing that the little ones, at any rate, have not been in want."

It was only from about his fortieth year that his pictures began to sell at the rate of from 250 to 300 francs each. Rousseau, who had himself known the extremes of poverty, was the first to give him a large sum, buying "The Wood Cutter" for 4,000 francs under the pretense that it was for an American purchaser. It was resold at the Hartmann sale in 1880 for 138,000 francs. By the beginning of the sixties, however, Millet's reputation was no longer in question. At the Paris exposition of 1867 he was represented by [illegible] and received the great

the hanging committee. But he still continued what has been happily called his "life of sublime monotony," his sojourn in Barbizon being interrupted only during the war of 1871, when he retired to Cherbourg, painting there some fine pictures of the sea. He died in 1875 at the age of sixty and was buried in the little churchyard of Chailly, overlooking the forest. A rock in the latter bears a bronze tablet on which a sculptor has represented side by side the bust portraits of Rousseau, the father of modern French landscape, and Millet, the artist of the people who work in the fields.—Charles H. Coffin in St. Nicholas.

Given Up to Die.

B. Spiegel, 1204 N. Virginia St., Evansville, Ind., writes: "For over five years I was troubled with kidney and bladder affections which caused me much pain and worry. I lost flesh and was all run-down, and a year ago had to abandon work entirely. I had three of the best physicians who did me no good, and I was practically given up to die. Foley's Kidney Cure was recommended and the first bottle gave me great relief, and after taking the second bottle I was entirely cured." J. W. McCollum & Co

Causes of Cancer.

"I could see no reason for the prevalence of cancer among the backwoodsmen of North America," says an English writer. "The other day, however, I happened to read in an account of the backwoods of Canada that the lumbermen maintain their remarkable powers on buckwheat cakes served with molasses, potato pies, baked beans, white bread, pork and bacon. So far good, but that tea, black as ink, sweetened with molasses or sugar house sirup, is always near the fire by day and by night and is used in vast quantities. Here we have the rich nutriment and the great excess of stewed tea and the excess of sugar, corresponding to the excessive beer and excessive coffee of parts of Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Baden and Bavaria, in all of which cancer is exceedingly prevalent."

Apes and Beards.

Almost all apes have beards. Darwin says that gorillas, chimpanzees and orang outangs have also stiff and bristly hairs upon their upper lips, resembling cats' whiskers. The beards of apes possess a remarkable resemblance to those of men, in being almost invariably lighter in color than the hair of the head. In apes the chin growth is most frequently yellow or red, becoming white in age. It is common to both sexes, although more strongly developed in the male. Apes—and monkeys also—have eyebrows as well, which do not grow thickly together as in human beings, but are scattered through the hair, covering the part of the face which would be called the forehead in man.

Cured Hay Fever and Summer Cold.

A. J. Nushbaum, Batesville, Indiana, writes: "Last year I suffered for three months with a summer cold so distressing that it interfered with my business. I had many of the symptoms of hay fever, and a doctor's prescription did not reach my case, and I took several medicines which seemed to only aggravate my case. Fortunately I insisted upon having Foley's Honey and Tar and it cured me. My wife has since used Foley's Honey and Tar with the same success." J. W. McCollum & Co.